

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02749 081747Z

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ACTION IO-03

INFO OCT-01 IOE-00 ISO-00 /004 W
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P 081630Z MAR 74
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6821

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E.O. 11652: N/A DECON 3/8/75
TAGS: AORG, APER, UNRWA, LE
SUBJECT: LIVING ARRANGMENTS FOR UNRWA DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GENERAL,
BEIRUT

REF: STATE 43530

FOLLOWING ARE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS RAISED REFTTEL, KEYED ACCORDING
TO ORDER IN WHICH QUESTIONS WERE ASKED:

1. MR. AND MRS. KONTOS OCCUPY 3-BEDROOM APARTMENT ON HILLSIDE
IN BEIRUT SUBURB (BAABDA), 20-25 MINUTES COMMUTING TIME FROM
UNRWA HQS. QUARTERS, ACCORDING TO KONTOS, ARE "ADEQUATE" FOR
CHILDLESS ADULT COUPLE. THEY PARTICULARLY SUITABLE FOR FAMILY WITH
CHILDREN, ALHJVUGH LANDLORD REFUSES REANT TO FAMILIES WITH YOUNG
(BELOW TEENAGE) CHILDREN. KONTOS HAS GIVEN REQUIRED 30-DAY NOTICE
TO LANDLORD, WHOM HE EXPECTS WILL HAVE LITTLE TROUBLE IN RE-RENTING
FLAT SOON AFTER HIS DEPARTURE. HE THINKS IT UNLIKELY LANDLORD WOULD
AGREE TO HOLD QUARTERS VACANT PENDING HIS REPLACEMENT'S UNCERTAIN
ARRIVAL DATE.

2. IN OUR EXPERIENCE, 2-BEDROOM FLATS HAVING REASONABLY ADEQUATE
SPACE FOR REPRESENTATION ARE HARD TO FIND HERE. AT PRESENT RATES,
THEY NOW RUNNING BETWEEN L.L. 9,000 - 11,000 PER ANNUM (APPROXI-
MATELY L.L. 2.40 EQUALS ONE DOL). RENTS FOR 3-BEDROOM UNITS
AVERAGE L.L. 13,000 - 16,000. HIGHER FIGURES IN BOTH CASES WOULD
BE FOR QUARTERS HAVING VIEW OF SEA. HOUSES HERE AGQJEXPENSIVE
AND FEW AND FAR BETWEEN (MAINLY IN DISTANT SUBURBS).

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3. UNRWA COMGEN ASSUMES HIS DEPUTY WOULD LIVE IN KEEPING

WITH HIS STATUS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS SENIOR INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANT. LOCATION OF HIS QUARTERS WOULD BE DICTATED NOT ONLY BY EASE OF ACCESS TO HIS OFFICE, BUT ALSO BY FAMILY PREFERENCES. SCHOOLING REQUIREMENTS, ETC.

4. RE WILLINGNESS TO SELL HIS FURNITURE, KONTOS ENVISAGES LITTLE OPPORTUNITY FOR OVERLAP WITH HIS SECESSOR AND--WITHOUT KNOWING LATTER'S TASTES--THINKS IN IMPRACTICABLE TO LEAVE UNSOLD FURNITURE BEHIND PENDING REPLACEMENT'S ARRIVAL. ATTRACTIVE, MODERN-STYLE FURNITURE IS EASILY OBTAINABLE IN BEIRUT, BUT PRICES RUN CONSIDERABLY HIGHER THAN THOSE IN U.S. ALSO, QUALITY CAN SOMETIMES PRESENT PROBLEMS. EMBASSY SPENDS, ON AVERAGE AND WITH FREIGHT INCLUDED, APPROXIMATELY DOLS 8,500 FOR SET OF AMERICAN-MADE 2-BEDROOM FURNITURE OF MEDIUM QUALITY (E.G., DREXEL). THIS INCLUDES GAS STOVE, REFRIGERATOR AND SPIN-DRY WASHER.

5. IT IS CUSTOMARY FOR DEPUTY TO HAVE AT LEAST HOUSEHOLD MAID. KONTOS EMPLOYES CLEANING-WASING LADY ON ALTERNATE WEEKDAYS. L.L. 12.00 IS GOING RATE FOR 7-8 HOUR DAY.

6. KONTOS WOULD BE WILLING SELL HIS CAR TO HIS REPLACEMENT, BUT AGAIN NOTES THIS MAY BE IMPRACTICAL IF THERE IS NO OVERLAP BETWEEN THEM. USED AS WELL AS NEW CARS, LARGE AND SMALL ARE AVAILABLE IN BEIRUT. SINCE DEPUTY COMGEN HAS DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES, SMALL EUROPEAN OR JAPANESE CARS COULD BE PURCHASED SLIGHTLY MORE CHEAPLY THAN IN US.

7. NO READILY APPARENT PROBLEMS IN PROCUREMENT OCCUR TO US, ALTHOUGH MANY FOREIGN FAMILIES IN BEIRUT OFTEN EXPERIENCE DIFFICULTY IN FINDING SATISFACTORY HOUSEMAIDS AND HAVE TO DISCHARGE ONE OR TWO BEFORE HIRING ONE TO THEIR LIKING.

8. DEPUTY POST CARRIES DUTY-FREE IMPORT PRIVILEGES, WITHOUT TIME-LIMIT. GASOLINE EXCISE TAX IS ALSO WAIVED, AND EXCISE TAXES ON OTHER COMMODITIES PURCHASED LOCALLY ARE NEGLIGIBLE. AS FOR AUTOMOBILES, DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGE APPLIES TO ONLY ONE DUTY-FREE VEHICLE, WHETHER IMPORTED BY OWNER OR PURCHASED LOCALLY. GODLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BEIRUT02749
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740359/aaaaccnv.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 43530
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 AUG 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <03-Sep-2002 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LIVING ARRANGMENTS FOR UNRWA DEPUTY COMMISSIONER GENERAL, BEIRUT
TAGS: AORG, APER, LE, UNRWA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005